



**SENATOR
JOE ZARELLI**



**REPRESENTATIVE
ED ORCUTT**



**REPRESENTATIVE
RICHARD CURTIS**

2006 SESSION UPDATE

18TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Winter 2006

Dear friends and neighbors,

We've temporarily closed our legislative offices in Kalama and Camas and relocated to Olympia for the 2006 legislative session. The session is scheduled for 60 calendar days, so we'll be back home soon. In the meantime we will work as a team and with our Republican and Democrat colleagues to address the challenges facing our state.

Most of the legislation that will become law this year will have strong bipartisan support. But philosophical differences will emerge as we debate fundamental issues like education, health care, public safety, taxes and spending, the role of government and the rights of citizens. Defining and discussing our differences is a normal part of the lawmaking process, and valuable — because it gives the citizens of our state an opportunity to decide which position they prefer.

This session we took a list of 11 goals to the Capitol. These goals — representing our commitment to the people of the 18th District, and Washington as a whole — reflect what we and our colleagues have heard from you and people around the state. We hope you can take a few minutes to look them over, and read about a few specific pieces of legislation we're sponsoring.

Please call, e-mail or write us with your questions or comments, and drop by for a visit if you are in Olympia. We appreciate your ongoing support.

In your service,

Sen. Zarelli

Rep. Orcutt

Rep. Curtis

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE 18TH DISTRICT AND WASHINGTON

- ▶ Put government on a budget by restoring voter-approved tax and spending limits.
- ▶ Protect our kids from sex offenders by passing "Jessica's Law Plus" — legislation based on Florida's Jessica Lunsford Act that would give Washington the nation's toughest law against sex offenders.
- ▶ Give health care back to patients by allowing affordable, tailored choices that work best for them and their families.
- ▶ Get government out of the way of job growth by removing the regulatory burden on small business, repealing the death tax, and reforming unemployment insurance.
- ▶ AIM for safer neighborhoods through enhanced penalties for Auto theft, Identity theft and Methamphetamine production.
- ▶ Welcome families to our state parks by eliminating the day use fee.
- ▶ Help every student achieve WASL standards and graduate on time by offering remedial classes, tutors, and expanded summer school programs.
- ▶ Help needy families by reducing energy costs.
- ▶ Allow citizens and their elected representatives — not the courts — to decide the definition of marriage.
- ▶ Protect property rights and prevent government from taking property without compensation.
- ▶ Strengthen the family farm by providing tax relief, allowing families to use their land as intended, and ensuring access to water.

YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR TOWN HALL MEETINGS!

**SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 18**

Camas
10 - 11:30 a.m.
Camas Public Library
625 NE 4th Avenue

Kalama
1 - 2:30 p.m.
Fire Station 52 Training Center
415 Todd Road

Also, join us **Wednesday, Feb. 22** from **10:15 to 2** for **18th District Day** at the Capitol !!
RSVP to Rep. Orcutt's office at (360) 786-7812 by Monday, Feb. 20.
Bring photo ID if you're interested in touring the Governor's Mansion.

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Committees:

- Ways and Means
(Ranking Republican Member)
- International Trade and Economic Development
- Rules

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- Finance (Ranking Republican Member)
- Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks

Internet page:

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- Education
- Health Care (Assistant Ranking Republican)
- Transportation

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<http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/curtis.htm>

2006 SESSION UPDATE



FROM SEN. ZARELLI:

This session the Legislature will adopt a supplement to the 2005-07 state operating budget. The supplemental budget is intended to cover costs that couldn't be anticipated when that budget was passed in April 2005 – we didn't know how much our K-12 school enrollments would increase in the new school year, for example, or how many wildfires would have to be fought during the summer.

I'm a member of the State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council, along with Rep. Orcutt. The latest revenue forecast indicates the state treasury will be more than a billion dollars in the black – on paper – thanks to a hot real estate market and a lot of home-building. However, we know the economy goes in cycles, and property sales and construction will slow. **This is no time to add to the state's spending commitments.**

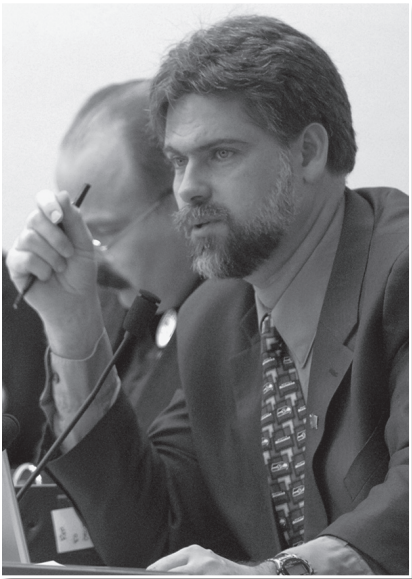
As the ranking Republican member on the Senate Ways & Means Committee, I'll have a hand in negotiating the Senate's supplemental budget. **If new spending is proposed above and beyond the adjustments for unanticipated costs, my first priority will be to reduce other spending accordingly.** I have also proposed legislation for a constitutionally protected "rainy day" fund that could be tapped only with a three-fifths vote of both the House and Senate. The era of drastic tax increases during lean times and unrestrained spending during times of plenty must end.

FROM REP. ORCUTT:

I'm the ranking Republican member on the House Finance Committee, which makes me our side's lead negotiator on tax issues. **Already we've made progress toward reducing the burden on Washington employers.** They used to have until the 25th of the month to pay their business taxes. A few years ago that was changed to the 20th, so the state could deposit the money sooner and collect extra interest. With the state predicting a revenue surplus, I called on the governor to move the tax payment deadline back to the 25th. I'm happy to report she has indicated support for that change, and I have introduced the legislation (**House Bill 2672**) to make it happen.

The House has passed a bill to eliminate the sales and use tax on diesel fuel used in off-road farm equipment. This tax change benefits agriculture – which is great – but not our building contractors or forest harvesters, who use plenty of diesel-powered equipment. I've introduced **House Bill 2928** to offer them and others who buy off-road diesel the same tax relief given to agriculture. As a member of the House's natural resources committee and a consulting forester in private life, I know many people who would be glad to have that tax come off.

But there's much more the Legislature can do to help employers survive – better yet, thrive. **Southwest Washington especially needs more jobs, and since becoming your representative I've consistently supported legislation to improve our business climate.** I hope 2006 brings the demise of the death tax that was adopted last year. It's more than distasteful to think about government slipping its hand into the pocket of a grieving family – this tax could mean the end for a small business that's barely hanging on. Our state treasury can do without the death tax proceeds, and I'd like to repeal the other new taxes from 2005 as well. Those taxes are bad news for border counties like Cowlitz and Clark, and they make our tax system more regressive.



FROM REP. CURTIS:

As the assistant ranking Republican on the House Health Care Committee, I have been working with my colleagues to pass a **meaningful health care reform** for patients suffering with mental illness. Patients that need special prescriptions to lead a functional life while facing the challenges of a mental illness need our help. They should have access to affordable health care and they should have access to affordable prescriptions to lead a functional life. I am also looking at options in our state's health care system to increase availability of health care plans and other options that show great promise for the doctors and the patients.

Taking care of the volunteers that take care of us is the focus of my bill, **House Bill 2608** - the **Volunteer Firefighters' and Reserve Officers' Relief and Pension Act**. This bill makes sure that volunteer firefighters who are injured while performing community service as part of their local fire department duties receive medical benefits the same as a full-time paid firefighter would performing the same community service work. We rely on our volunteer firefighters to race to our homes when there's a fire, to be first on the scene of a car accident, but we also rely on them to perform community service activities in our community. Recognizing our volunteer firefighter personnel as an invaluable asset in our community, whether saving a life or delivering food baskets, is the goal of my legislation.

My **Vehicle Purchaser's Tax Fairness Bill** is a consumer protection bill I introduced this session to specifically address tax fairness for consumers purchasing a used car. **House Bill 2638** will ensure that consumers pay taxes on the money spent – not what the state says should have been spent. The current state tax system applies use tax, which is a tax equivalent to sales tax, to the sale of a used vehicle. Washington calculates use tax on a used car purchase based on the book value, not on the price the purchaser paid - even if it was far below book value. So, if you got a good deal on a car, paying far below book value, you will still be charged use tax on what the state thinks you should have paid, not what you actually spent. Dealing with taxation issues, particularly tax fairness, should be one of our top priorities. And when we can tackle it on something as common as a car purchase, we're headed in the right direction.



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Washington State
Department of Printing

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Printed on recycled paper